THE HOLIE exercise of a true Fast, described out of Gods word.

¶ Ioel. 2.12.13.

Turne you vnto me (saith the Lord) with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning. And rent your heart, and not your clothes: and turne vnto the Lord your God, for he is gracious, and merciful, slowe to anger, and of great kindnesse, and repenteth him of the euill.

Seene and allowed.

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THE HOLIE EXERCISE OF A true Fast, described out of Gods word.

IT IS AN EVIdent declaration, of a maruellous blindnesse which is in vs, to order our steps towardes the kingdome of heauen: that like children newe come into the worlde, we know not when to eate, and when to forbeare eating, no further then we haue our direction out of Gods word. But it is yet more maruell, that in so small a matter, scarse the hundred person, of those which professe the name of Christ, knowe either how

to enter into this way, or howe to turne them in it when they are entred, to any glory of God, or profite of themselues. For to let the Papistes goe, which through a shameful superstition in it, rather pine away their soules, then take downe their bodies: it is a shame to speake, how few there are, of those which beare the name of Gospellers, that haue so much as the knowledge of this exercise, so far are they from any lawfull and right practise of it. For a great number as a needlesse thing, reiect it altogether. For shaking off the Popish yoke, from their owne neckes, by vsing, or rather, abusing their libertie: they suffer their seruants to remaine still vnder it. Which custome, vnlesse it be thorough

rough infirmitie of body, or ſome other weightie cauſe: it can hardly eſcape the hot and vehement ſuſpicion, either of belly gods, if thinking it religious in their ſeruants, they themſelues will not obſerue it: or of a couetous minde, if hauing no ſuch opinion of it, they doe notwithſtanding conſtraine their ſeruants thereunto. An other ſort there be, which being afraide of the reproch of belly gods, and thinking it, ſitting to the Chriſtian profeſſion, to keepe the fleſh in ſome bridle: allowe (in deede) of the exerciſe of faſting, but for want of knowledge of a better, they ſticke ſtill in the mire of the Popiſh faſt. For remedie whereof, there followeth a treatiſe, whereby the true faſt being vnder-

ſtanded: as wel the prophane opiniõ, of thoſe which reiect this exerciſe, as the foliſh ſuperſtition of thoſe, which cõtent thẽ ſelues with a ſhadow therof, is laid open.

" Faſting therefore, is an abſti-
" nence commaunded of the Lorde:
" thereby to make ſolemne profeſſion of
" our repentance. Wherein, that which
" is ſaide of the Lord commaunding it:
is to be conſidered againſt thoſe, whiche would thruſt this exerciſe, out of the doores of Chriſtian Churches. For the repreſſing of which errour, let that be called to remembrance, whiche the Lord commaunded by Moſes: * that euery ſoule once a yeare ſhould humble it ſelfe, in faſting before the Lord, in one of the great aſ-

* Leuit. 16. 29, 30, 31, & 23. 27. to 33 Num. 29. 7.

ſemblies

ſemblies of his people. For although the ceremonie of the day be taken away by the comming of our Sauiour Chriſte: yet the thing it ſelfe is no more taken away, then a reſt for Gods ſeruice is baniſhed, becauſe the Iewes Saboth is aboliſhed. For, when as (no doubt) the conſideration of the faſt was, that the wrath of God, ſhould not breake out againſt them, or being broke out, ſhould be cauſed to returne home againe: the ſame cauſe remaining, there is good reaſon the ſame effect ſhould continue. And when it is an hũbling of a man before his God: was there any degree of caſting downe, neceſſarie for that people, whiche is not neceſſarie for vs? either ought thei to haue gone downe lower

into the conceit of their vnworthineſſe, then we into the conſcience of our guiltineſſe? whoſe benefites as they are greater then theirs, ſo the abuſe of them ſhould driue vs, to the loweſt humiliation that can be, ſo it be lawfull and warrantable by the word of God.

But if this holy exerciſe of Faſting, doe not clearely enough appeare, to be no fading or ſhadowing ceremonie, by this ſet and ordinarie Faſt, bicauſe the like doth not agree with the time of the Goſpell: yet by other moueable and vncertain faſtes, which were holden vpon occaſion, the ſame may be more ſtrongly ſtrengthened. For where we ſee the like occaſion of faſt, that was then

there

there we may be assured of the same commaundement to fast, that was giuen them: commaundement I say, least any man thinking it to be a will worshp, taken vp at the pleasure of men, might thinke he had as good (or better) right to lay it downe, thē they had, to take it vp. For proofe whereof, that one place of the Prophet Ioel shall suffice, which, vpon occasion of a great dearth in the lande, commaundeth in the Lords behalfe, to sanctifie a fast. By which one cōmandement, it is euident, that other fastes, which were kept, either by the Churches publiquely, or by some of the faithfull priuatly: were done in obedience, and not at the randon of mans inuention. If this be not sufficient, to subdue our Ioel. 2. 12.

ſturdie affections, to this ſo holy an exerciſe: yet at the leaſt, let them ſtoupe vnder ſo manifeſt, both doctrine and examples hereof, by the Churches of GOD vnderneath the Goſpell. For when as our Saviour Christ, being charged by the Phariſees and Iohns Diſciples, that his Diſciples faſted not, ſo anſwered, that he did not only not condemne it, but highly alſo commend it, ſo it were done ſeaſonably: It is plaine, that the libertie which the Goſpell bringeth, hath not remoued the ancient bound of a Chriſtian faſt. And if we looke into the practiſe, whereby the way chalked out by his doctrine, is troden and beaten plaine vnto vs by examples: it will ſoone be ſeene, how great-

Luk. 5. 33.

ly

by they deceiue them ſelues, which vnder the colour of greater perfectiō attained vnder the Goſpel, caſt away the aſſiſtance, that the Lord offreth by this exerciſe. For if we enquire of the Churches and Apoſtles faſting, then was it moſt often, when they were fulleſt of the graces of God: that is, after the ſolemne ſending of the holy Ghoſt.

If we thinke then, that this exerciſe of faſt, be too ceremonius, bicauſe it was tied to a certaine day: the commaundement to holde it without any ſuch reſtraint, vnto a certaine time, ought to correct that thought of ours. If we ſtande in feare, that it ſhould be too Iewiſh: the doctrine of the Goſpell is ready, to pull vs out of

that

that feare. If presumption of greater graces, then those which should need such a supplie, doe bring this fast out of conceit with vs: the practise of it by the holy Apostles, at the highest toppe of their perfection in this world, will easily set vp the credite thereof againe. But if fastes, neither standing nor sitting, neither vnder the lawe, nor vnder the Gospell, neither of the weaker, nor of the stronger, can draw vs into loue, and (in loue) into practise thereof: it must needes be confessed, that there is a maruellous poison of rebellion in our natures, which all this triacle of the Lords high authoritie, and of such authorized examples of the children of God, will not cast foorth. Howbeit, the Lorde

leaueth

launeth vs not here, but vnto his Lordly authoritie, of commaunding this exercise of fast, hath added fatherly promises, to allure vs vnto the same: as towardes the end of this treatise, shall plainely appeare.

This exercise therfore of fasting, being both of such authoritie, and of so great weight to pul wrath vpon vs, if it be neglected: let vs nowe see in what things (especially) it doth consist. And they are in number two. The former is of the outward, and (as the Apostle calleth it,) of the bodily exercise: the other is of the inward vertues, helped forward by the bodily exercises. For the outward ceremonie, it is an abstinence for a time, from the commodities and pleasures

1. Tim. 4.8.

of

of this life, therby to make vs the a-
" ter to the inward vertue . And thi
" outward abſtinence is therfore com-
" maunded, that we ſhould both feele
" and in feeling, profeſſe that we a
" vnworthie either of life, or of a
" thing that belõgeth to the vpholdi
" thereof. And albeit, it may appea
but a childiſh thing to carnall me
and a thing vnworthie the wiſedo
of the Goſpell, to place any thing
this bodily exerciſe, ſeeing that t
Lorde is a ſpirit, and will be worſhi-
ped in ſpirit and trueth, and ſeei
that they being of their owne natu
neither good nor euill, can not ma
vs either better or worſe : yet if
conſider that it is the Lordes ord
nance, who hath ſo commanded it,
ca

can not be but most assured, that the Lorde who hath so instituted it, will giue it a blessing, and cause it to prosper, to that end whereunto he hath ordained it: if we vndertake it in his feare, and in a conscience of obeying the Lordes commaundement. Those which came either to runne, or to wrastle for the best game: were wont to abstaine from such things, as might hinder their exercise, or make them lesse able to performe thē with praise. And what soeuer, either pith in their armes, or swiftnesse in their legges, they had otherwise: yet as they neglected not that abstinence, so they found that it greatly profited them, to the better breathing and other inabling of them, to their exercises. 1.Cor.9.25

And

And shall we thinke, that the dye which the Lorde him selfe hath appointed, to the fitting of vs towarder the spiritual wrastling with our fleshly mind, shal not haue a singular fruit? And if there were no other fruit of this abstinence, but that the enimies mouth should thus be stopped, which charge the Gospell, to set open a schoole to al licentiousnesse of eating, & to giue (as it were) a sauce to prouoke mens appetites thervnto, which are otherwise too sharpe set of them selues: it should be no small effect of our abstinence. In deed the Papistes charge vpon vs, is here the same and

Luke.5.33. *no other, then the Pharisees, against the Disciples of our Sauiour Christ: but why should not we, if we desire*

that

that the Gospel should be wel spokē of, take away the occasiō of such speches.

But let vs see wherein this abstinence doth consist, where first of all commeth to be considered, the abstinence from meates and drinkes, whereof (as the principall of the outward obseruations) the whole exercise tooke the name. And the word it selfe with the practise declare, that it is not only a sober vse of meats, which ought to be continual al the life long, or a more sparing diet then at other times: but an vtter abstinence from euening to euening, from all kinde of meates and drinkes. Whereby it appeareth, that the Popish fast is nothing lesse, then the fast which the Scripture teacheth: for they breake

2.Sam.12. 16.17. Ezr.10.6. Leui.23.32. Iudg.20.26

the necke of this abſtinence, both by fulneſſe and by delicacie. By fulnes, in that it is lawfull (as other dayes) at dinner to fill them ſelues with any thing, fleſh only excepted: at euening and morning to fill them ſelues with bread and drinke. By delicacie for that, where men on that day, ſhould content them ſelues with common & courſe meates, ſufficient only for preſeruation of health: the Papiſtes in their abſtinence, did either not ſo much as aime at this marke, or elſe they ſhot groſſely wide. For in permitting the vſe of all things at their dinner, beſides fleſh: it is euident, that they left greater dainties, and greater ſtirrers of fleſhly luſtes, then they did cut off. And beſides, the dainties

in

in meates: wine, (then which there is nothing more prouoking) was as vsuall that day as of others. And at euening, when they would giue the cleareſt teſtimonie of their abſtinence, and when they did light their candels (as it were) to ſhewe their abſtinence by: the greateſt part of thoſe that were both able and might finde in their hearts, to beſtowe it of them ſelues, had their tables furniſhed with ſpicebread, with fruites of this ſide and beyond the ſeas, with Marmelet and Sucket, and ſuch like: then which dealing, what could be more childiſh? to deny the taſting, only of one morſell of fleſh, and to permit a fulneſſe of bread: to forbid the courſer meats & table, which might

haue bene furnished for two pence, & to drawe in the delicatest meates, which could not be prouided for twitie shillings: to restraine the vse of things bred at home, and to leaue the vse free of things fetched out of Barbarie: finally to condemne the eating of a peece of smoakie and reastie bakon, and to iustifie the banqueting and iunqueting dishes, which are before mentioned. That I speak nothing of some of the poorer sort, which vpon the Thursday at night, and Friday at dinner, would fill their bellies the fuller, that they might passe ouer their abstinence, with lesse feeling the want of their accustomed diet. All which things, as we condemne in the Papistes: so we must carefully take heede

heede that they be not found in vs: vnlesse we haue forgot, that in iudgeing them we condemne our selues, when as we do the same things, whithe we finde fault worthy in them. Rom. 2. 1.

An other of these corporall exercises is watching, or a cutting short of our ordinarie sleepe: which we may apply to the furtherance of this exercise. For beside that this abstinence, is a remouing of ordinarie pleasures and commodities: it appeareth, that some thing also should be pared from it. For beside that it is meete that there should be a certaine conformitie and sutableness of our whole behauiour, all the time of the fast: the Prophet Ioel exhorting the Priestes to this holy exercise of fast, biddeth Ioel. 1. 13.

them that they ſhould continue in ſackcloth in the night time, extending this exerciſe (at the leaſt) to ſom part of the night. Where notwithſtanding it is to be noted, that as well in the former abſtinence from meate, as in this withdrawing of ſome part of ſleepe, that neither is ſo ſtreighthly required of the Lord, but that thoſe whoſe either diſeaſe, or other infirmitie will not beare this abſtinence, without hazard of their health, may vſe ſo much libertie, as ſhall ſerue for the preſeruation of their health: ſo they take heed they vſe not this gentle dealing of the Lord, as a cloake to hide the luſtes of their fleſh withall.

A third kinde of abſtinence is in the apparell, that albeit they put not on ſack-

sackcloth and ashes, as the holy fa- »
thers did in times past, yet that they »
content them selues with a common »
kinde of attire, auoyding all such cost- »
linesse and curiositie, wherby in tric- »
king and trimming vp them selues, »
the flesh may take occasion of being »
proud. Thus the lord, when he would »
haue the children of Israel to hum- Exod. 33. 5
ble them selues before him: spake to
Moses, saying, speake vnto the chil-
dren of Israel, that for the present
time, they lay aside their iewels and
ornaments, that I may knowe what I
shall do with them. And thus farre
hath it bene spoken of the outward
exercises, which are generall, and to
be don of al, which make this solemne
profession of repentance. There is one

yet which is more ſpeciall, belonging vnto married perſons alone, which is, that they for the time, ſhould with
1. Cor. 7.5. " conſent abſtaine from the mutuall fe-
" lowſhip one of an other, which is ſo
Ioel. 2.16. " ſtraitly required, that euen the brid-
" grome and the bride, (which of all o-
" ther ought to haue the greateſt pri-
" uiledge in that point) are bidden at
" ſuch times, to come out of their cha-
" bers.

Rom. 14.17. But for as much as, the kingdome of heauen ſtandeth not in theſe thinges, and the Lorde being a ſpirit, will be worſhipped in ſpirite and trueth: either theſe exerciſes muſt lead vs to ſome farther thing, or elſe the ſame accuſation will lye againſt vs, wherewith the Prophet charged the Iſrae-

Israelites, who contenting themselues with the outwarde ceremony of abstinence, were sent home as empty as they came. And in deede, vnlesse we bring more with vs, thē this our abstinency, our fastes may bee matched with the beastes fast of Niuie, for they also both eate nothing, and were couered with sackcloth: yea the beastes fast, may be so much better then ours, as there be some kinds of beastes, that can longer endure without meate and sleepe then wee. Where the Papistes fast, which was shewed before to be childishe, may here be proued to be beastly and brutish. For if they did onely abstaine from meate, they iudged themselues to haue holden a good fast vnto the

Esay. 58. 3.

Ionas. 3. 7.

Lorde. There followe the inwarde vertues helped forward by the bodily
Esdra. 6.21. *exercise, which in the number* * *two.*
" *The one is the humbling and casting*
" *downe of our selues, before the high*
" *maiestie of God, with sorrow for our*
" *sinnes: the other, is the assuraunce*
" *that we haue, that with forgiuenesse*
" *of them, we shall obtaine the thinge*
" *that we stande in need of, and make*
" *sute for.*

Here therefore, first commeth to be considered, our humbling and casting downe, which is a vile esteeming of our selues, aunswering to the outward exercise. For therefore
" *doe we abstaine for a time, that we*
" *might therby haue a quicker feeling*
" *of our owne vnworthinesse. There-*

fore

fore we bring downe the bodie, that
the minde may be likewise brought
downe. Therefore we crucifie the
flesh, that the deserued death of the
spirite, may be the better knowen.
Therfore we abstaine from our plea- Mark.2.20.
sures and commodities, that through Luk.5.35.
conscience of sinne, and feeling of the Math.9.15.
wrath of God, either present, or to
come for the same: we might drawe
our selues to a greater sorrowe. In
which respect, the exercise which the
other Euangelistes call fasting, Saint
Mathew calleth mourning. Here- Ioel.2.17.
vppon it cometh, that weeping which 1.Sam.7.6.
is a witnesse of our sorrowe, is annex-
ed vnto the fast; which the children
of God haue don so plentifully in this
exercise, that they haue bene sayde, 1.Sam.7.6.

to

to haue drawne whole bucketes of water: which the depth of the sorowe for their sinnes, & the anger of God, against them hath ministred. And as these outwarde exercises are commaunded, to drawe vs to a feeling of our vnworthinesse: so in the feeling thereof, by them we make a solempne confession of the same. For the Children of God in time past, by their abstinence from meate and drinke, confessed themselues vnworthy so much as of a crumme of bread, or droppe of water: by putting on sackcloth, vnworthie of the worst ragge to couer their shame with. So that if common honestie and health would haue suffered, they woulde haue stripped themselues starke naked. The same

it to be vnderſtanded, of the benefite "
of ſleepe, and company of mariage, as "
alſo of all other the commodities of "
this life: whereof they did not onely "
confeſſe themſelues vnworthie, but in "
that they put duſt & aſhes vpon their "
heads, they gaue to vnderſtand, that "
they were vnworthy of the life it ſelf, "
and that they deſerued to be as farre "
vnderneath the ground, as they were "
aboue it: yea if there had beene any "
thing, apter to haue ſet foorth their "
euerlaſting condemnation in hell, of "
that alſo woulde they haue borne the "
marke, thereby to declare their guilt "
and deſert of the ſame. So that here- "
by they doe iuſtifie the Lorde, in that "
vengeaunce againſt them: whereof "
by this humbling of themſelues, they "

ſeeke "

« *seeke redresse. If then we keepe a holy fast vnto the Lord, we must thereby be humbled in our selues before the Lorde: but if vppon confidence of our fasting, wee waxe bolder to sinne, in a persuation that through obedience giuen vnto him, in this one point, wee may be bolder to be disobedient in others: or if the vse hereof doe make vs swell against our brethren, and after the example of the Pharisees, despise them which do not fast as we doe: then is the fast, appointed of the Lord for our medicine, become our bane and poyson.*

Luk. 5. 33.
Luk. 18. 11.

And therefore here nowe, wee giue a newe charge vppon the Popish fast, a great deale more hot then the former. For seeing that they with the

the proude Phariſee, boaſt of the merite of their faſtes, ſetting theſe faſtes (as other workes) in the place of the bloode of Christ: It is manifeſt, that their faſtes are ſo farre frō humbling them, that through the opinion of them, they riſe vp againſte the Lorde, and doe their beſt to ſet themſelues, euen in the throne of God: ſo that vnto the childiſhneſſe & brutſhnes, of their faſt aboue mentioned, here they haue added an horrible & blaſphemous ſacriledge. To the cō- „
paſſing of this true humbling of our „
ſinnes, is annexed neceſſarily, an in- „
formation and meditation of the fil- „
thineſſe of our ſinnes, and of the iuſte „
vengeance of the Lord againſt them, „
declared in the threateninges of the „
law, „

" law, and execution of the iudgemen-
" tes of God against the wicked, and
" namely against our Sauiour Christ,
" who putting vppon himselfe our wic-
" kednesse, suffered hell paines for it:
" and specially an information and me-
" ditation of those, both sinnes and pu-
" nishmentes, which the present time
" and persons doe giue occasion of. And
thus farre touching the first part of
the inwarde vertues in fasting, stan-
ding in the casting downe of our sel-
ues before the Lord.

There followeth the other part,
" which is a profession of our faith, that
" we shall be lifted vp as high, through
" the grace of the Lord our God in Ie-
" sus Christ, as the conscience of our
" sinnes doth cast vs downe: and that

we

we shall obtaine, the remouing of the euills tending to our destruction, (through the worthinesse of our Saiour Christ,) which either presently presse vs, or hange ouer our heads, through our owne vnworthinesse. For as true repentance, casting vs downe with one hand, both in sorrowe for our sinnes, and confession of the same, leaueth vs not in our downefall, but through faith, reacheth vs the other hand, to lift vs vp againe: so this solemne profession of our repentance, carying vs first to the valley of trouble, afterward bringeth vs backe againe, to the gate of hope. In which respect, we alwayes finde in the holy Scriptures, * that fasting is ioyned with praier, * which cā neuer

* Ezra.9.5. Nehem.1.4. Dan.9.3. Iudg.20.26 Luke.5.33. 1.Cor.7.7. * 2. Chron. 20.6. Iames.1.6. Iohn.16.23.

be truly made, without hope of obtaining the grace, that is prayed for. But for as much as prayer, is a daily and ordinarie exercise of Gods children:

* Ionas. 3. 8. Esay. 58. 4. *it is manifest* * *that by the prayer which is coupled with fasting, there is vnderstanded a speciall or peereless kinde of prayer, both in zeale and strength of prayer, as also in continuance of the same. Whereby appeareth, that here is an other vse of the outward abstinence, that it might be as it were a wing, wherewith the praier, that otherwise through earthly affections, creepeth vpon the grounde, might the easilier flee vp into heauē: and that it might be a grindestone, to make a point of it, that it may pearce, and to set an edge that it may*

cut,

cut, both the visible and inuisible enimies, which we pray against. And therefore the outwarde abstinence that pulleth downe the body, helpeth to lift vp the minde, and crucifying the flesh, it quickneth the spirite, and maketh it more liuely to this exercise. Where yet againe the Popish fast is found insufficient, which vpon the dayes of their fastes, had no extraordinarie exercises of prayer: more then other dayes which were not fasted. To the better performance also of this part, is annexed an informatiõ and meditation, of the gracious promises of GOD, especially such as may serue for reliefe of the present occasions.

Wherin the better to correct our dul-

neſſe and heauineſſe to this ſo holy an exerciſe, let vs remember, that it is to obtaine ſome ſpeciall grace at the hand of the Lord. Whereby it is giuen vs to vnderſtand, that vpon due holding of this faſt vnto the Lord, there be excellent promiſes & a moſt ſingular reward. Whereof the place of Ioel, as it ſpake before, for the commaundement of all the faſtes, which the people of God vſed, ſo will it vndertake for the promiſes, which the Lorde hath made, to all thoſe which ſubmit them ſelues to the obedience thereof. The truth of which promiſes is ſo manifeſt in the Scriptures: as the Sunne (at noone dayes) can be no clearer. For let all the faſtes of the holy Churches, and of

Ioel. 2. 13. & 19. 20.

godly

godly men laid out in Scripture, both of the olde and newe Testament be ✶ *turned ouer: and it shall be seene, that the end of their fast (which kept it in any measure of trueth and simplicitie) was a feast, and the issue of their mourning, great reioysing. For, albeit the ordinarie prayers of the faithfull, returne not emptie vnto them againe: yet hauing regarde vnto these, which are ioyned with this exercise, they may worthily seem to be barren, which are otherwise fruitfull, and to be blasted, which otherwise seeme ful eared. Yea the fast of the wicked king Achab, ioined with no true repentance, nor so much as with any trueknowledge how to serue the Lord, but performed in some sort*

✶ Iudg. 20. 23. Ezra. 10. 6. Heſt. 4. 16. 2. Chron. 20. 3. Dan. 9. 20. Ionah. 3. 10. Act. 12. 5. Act. 13. 2. 1. Regum. 21. 27.

onely in keeping of the outward and bodily ceremonie, went not vnrewarded from the Lorde. For euen by the very ſhadowe of his exerciſe, the execution of that iudgement, which was awarded againſt him, touching his vtter raſing from the kingdome of Iſrael: was differred vntill his ſonnes dayes. Nowe, if the comming within the ſhadowe of this exerciſe, doeth heale ſome diſeaſes: what will it doe if wee come to touche the bodye thereof? and if the leaues of it, haue ſome vertue to preſerue men from the vengeance of God: howe ſoueraigne is the fruit, to deliuer vs from the wrath to come? And if the ordinarie obedience of the children of GOD, goeth not emptie, and vn-

rewarded

rewarded from the presence of GOD: this extraordinarie obedience and exercise, in the worshippe of GOD, must needes receiue speciall, and extraordinarie blessinges from his hande. When Benhadab the Syrian king, ouercome by Achab king of Israel, was out of hope of any safetie, at the length by the aduice of his seruaunts, he put himselfe and his companie in sackcloth, with ropes about their neckes: thinking by humbling themselues before the king, to obtaine pardon, which came to passe accordingly. If therefore, men in hope of obtaining pardon, will humble themselues to them, of whome they haue no promise, that they shal obtaine any thing:

1. Regum 20.29.

1. Reg. 20. 31. to 35.

howe much more ought we to doe it, which haue so sure promises of good successe? and if mercy was obtained of men, in whom there is scanta drop of that pitie and compassion, which is seafull in the Lorde: we may be well assured, that we shall not misse of it at his hande. And if one enimie, can looke for it at the hande of another: we may with greater assurance, looke for it at the hande of the Lorde, to whome we are already reconciled, by the bloud of his sonne.

Therefore, if the authoritie of the Lorde should not compell vs: yet the most liberall and certaine promises, should allure vs to this exercise. "*Which if we doe not, what remaineth, but that such as will not fast,*

with

with the children of GOD, must »
eate and drinke of the furious wrath »
of GOD, with the wicked: they that »
will not weepe with the one, must »
howle with the other. And finally, »
they that will haue no part, in the o-
bedience of the commaundement gi-
uen hereof, to both the peoples, vn-
der the Lawe and vnder the Gospell,
must haue no part in the promises
made to any of them: according as
the Lorde threateneth, that who so Leui. 23. 29.
euer shall not afflict or humble his Luke. 5. 35.
soule with the rest, that he will de-
stroy them from among his peo-
ple.

The time of fasting is the time
of affliction, either for want of some »
great benefite needfull, or through »

" feeling of ſome great iudgement pre-
" ſent, or to come. Where the Pope
faſt muſt paſſe an other condemna-
on, which maketh no difference o
choice of time: but appointeth eue
Friday, and other ſet euens yeare
whether the time be proſperous o
vnproſperous, whether it be peace o
warre, health or ſickneſſe, dearth
plentie. Which is al one, as if the Phy
ſician ſhuld nowe appoint his patien
this day twentie or fortie yeres hen
to take a purgation, or to be let blo
In which caſe, either he muſt b
Prophet, rather then a Phyſician,
knowe that he ſhall on that day, ha
neede of it: or elſe he muſt be a Phy
ſician of no value, ignorant, or vn
faithfull. As therefore the Phyſ
cia

epeneth no vaine, but with ob-
ation where the ſigne is, giueth
urgation, without heede taking
e time of the yeare, whether it
ring or fall, whether it be hot
olde: ſo it behoueth the ſpiritu-
Phyſician, to haue an eye vnto
time, when this medicine is in
ſon. And ſo much the more,
rather then there, as the daun-
is greater. For as a newe piece
cloth added to an olde garment,
eth ſomething from the olde,
cauſeth the rent to be worſe, Luke. 5.36.
n before: ſo faſting vnfitly ap-
d, to the ſtate of thoſe that are
yned to keepe it, maketh them
rſe, then they were before the faſt.
s that which more is, as the newe Luke. 5.37.

wine

wine put into olde veſſels, doeth
onely make them worſe, but bre
them all to pieces: ſo this faſt th
vpon thoſe, which are not, either
the time, or for ſome other cauſe
for it, doeth vtterly deſtroy the
Whereby men may perceiue, w
cauſe we haue to make a great c
ſcience of the Popiſh faſt, as t
which is able of it ſelfe (if there w
no other corruptions amongeſt the
to driue a man to eternall deſtru
on.

According alſo to the grea
neſſe of the affliction, the time of t
Leuit. 23. faſt is taken, by the diſcretion
27.28. " thoſe, to whome it belongeth, at
" leaſt for a whole day. And if
" wrath of the Lorde be hotter,

dayes or * elſe three, as it appea- *Eſter. 4.16
by the example of the Iewes in »
ſters time and of Saint Paul . » Act. 9.9.
d this time (what ſo euer) hath »
nature of a Saboth . For therein Leuit. 23.
are bound to abſtaine from their 30.31.
» labours, according to the ſame »
ghtneſſe, and with the ſame ex- »
ions, that they are bound to ob- »
the Saboth. And therefore the »
phet willeth them to ſanctifie a Ioel.2.12.
And the Lord threateneth, that Leui.23.32.
ſo euer ſhall doe any worke on »
day, him ſhall he cut off from a- »
geſt his people. The end whereof »
that men ſetting themſelues a »
from their daily occupations, »
t be wholy beſtowed in the ſpi- »
ll exerciſes aboue ſpecified. »

Where-

Whereby that we may knowe, t
there was neuer a thread in the
cloth of the Popish fast, which
not throughly infected with the
rituall leprosie, of disobedience
the Lorde: it is to be noted,
where they ordayned many
wicked and vnnecessarie holie da
* *this* * *one (and besides the Sa*
the onely holie day appointed
Lorde) they quite rased out of
Kalender. And of the fast in g
rall thus farre.

The kindes or sortes of faste
followe, which are either priua
publique.

The priuate fast is that, whic
vndertaken vpon some partic
calamitie, by the discretion of the
a

ainſt whome the calamitie is ſent.
nd it is either of a particular man
houſhold. In the former whereof it
to be obſerued, that for as much as
e faſt is ioyned with a ſeparation
m their daily occupations: that
ither children, nor ſcholers, nor
uantes, nor any other which be at
e diſpoſition and gouernement of
hers, can chuſe any ſuch day ap-
inted for common occupations,
ithout the conſent of thoſe that
aue commaundement ouer them.
ithout which conſent, they muſt be
rced to holde their faſtes vpon the
Lordes day, or other dayes of reſt,
eſtabliſhed in the places of their a-
ode. For here the Lawe of the
Lorde hath place, that if the wife,

ſonne,

Num. 30. 4. *sonne, or daughter, vowe a vowe vnto the Lord: that the husband or father shall haue power to breake it.*

" *The publique fast is that, which is vndertaken vpon some more generall calamitie of the Church, at the appointment of them, which (vnder* Ioel. 2. 15. " *Christ) haue the gouernement of the places, where the fast is holden. In this fast, bicause a publique assembly is commaunded: it followeth that the chiefe instruction of the foresaid profession of repentance, is to be fetched from the publique preaching of the word.*

Now leauing the causes of the priuate fasts, to the examinatiō of euery one, which cā best iudge of their own estate: let vs consider, what causes there

there be of a generall fast amongest vs. Wherein that it may be seene, that the trumpet of fasting is blowen rather, by the breath of GOD, then by the mouth of man: let vs take a short vewe of the causes, of the fastes mentioned in the Scripture. The cause of the fast is the wrath of God against the Church, where is to be considered, that the people of God haue not onely regarded this wrath, against them selues particularly, but against others also, of the same societie and fellowshippe in religion that they were of, through a mutuall feeling and compassion which they haue one with an other: as in the exãple of the Church of Antioch, whose fast appeareth to haue ben taken in hand, Act. 13.

rather for the miſerie of the Church of Ieruſalem, then for them ſelues. Now the Churches round about vs, being fallen into great decay, partly by the ſpirituall miſeries, as well of the hereſies of Papiſts, Arrians, Anabaptiſts, the Familie of loue &c. as alſo of the ſchiſme of Lutheraniſme daily preuayling, partly by bodily plagues of the peſtilence, almoſt in al places: of the ſword in our neighbour coũtries, and of the famine which waiteth cõmonly vpõ the ſame: it is euident that therby groweth one cauſe of hũbling our ſelues before our God. And when this wrath is cõſidered, either in that which is alreadie come, or in that which may be feared ſhortly to come: to whether ſo euer of the cauſes we looke, we ſhal find, that we haue cauſe

to fast. For what spirituall euil is in any of all their Churches, which are not altogether in ours? not one of those detestable heresies, but are lodged amongst vs. And although the schisme of Lutheranisme be not among vs, yet there is almost a great distraction of minds for the Church gouernement, beside the diuersities of iudgementes in many other matters. And among bodily punishments, the plague hath indifferently fed, and yet doeth feed vpō vs. The sword hath ben shaked at vs both in the North by traytours, and in the South by disordered wicked persons. And should it not strik vs that her maiestie was of late in daunger of her lsfe by a shot. Which that it was not meant towardes her,

An. 1579

ought not to abate our care for her maiestie, but rather encrease it: as that which was more nerely directed against her of the Lorde, to make both her and vs to crie for his gracious couer and protection ouer her. And if we consider the wrath that hangeth ouer our heades, the notes thereof are taken by the example of the people of God, and first of Ezra, who vnderstanding that the people had married straunge women, fasted: whereuppon we haue this note of the wrath to come, that considering how that sinne is committed openly in the land in diuerse sortes, that therefore anger is at hand. Here may be hādled with godly and discrete wisdome the sinnes of the lande.

Ezra.9.3.

The

The seconde note to knowe the tempest to come, is taken from the Niniuites fast. Wherevppon we gather, that for somuch as we are greeuously threatened, aswell by the ministers and seruauntes of the Lorde, that speake in his name vnto vs, as also by his late shaking of the earth: that sharpe iudgement (without repentaunce) must spedily come vppon vs. The thirde is taken from signes of the wrath of god, which may breake out against vs: as in Hester, where it was concluded at the request of Hamon, of the destruction of the whole Church, wherewith may fitly be compared the holy league (as they say) and decree of the late coūcel of Trent, against the whole church

Ionas. 3. 5.

Hester. 4. 6

and against ours particularly. An other signe, is the preparation made against the Church, or an indeuour to execute their malice, which draue Iosaphat and other moe to a fast. Here the loftie countenaunces, and vndewtifull demeanour of the Papistes, may be considered, with their rebellious attempts in Ireland; as also the Spanish nauie, and great preparation made amongst them of the holy league, with the present troubles in Scotland, & like accidents, sufficient to procure the practise of this holy exercise.

2. Paral. 20.

A

A GENERALL CONFESSION OF

Sinnes, to be made at the exercise of fasting: the more particuler confessiō being taken according to the estate of the seuerall Churches, by the good discretion of the minister, vpon the knowledge thereof.

Lord which art glorious in power & holines, we being but dust and ashes, with the casting of our selues downe, at the foote of thy high Maiestie: confesse that me are most vile sinners, conceiued and borne in sinne, & that we are by nature nothing else, but a lumpe of all. wickednesse, whose naturall propertie is, to growe in

sinne,

ſinne, as we growe in yeares, and to waxe ſtronge in wickednesse, as the powers of our mindes and bodies receiue ſtrength. There is in vs, no holſome nor ſounde knowledge howe to obey: there is no manner of good will or affection to pleaſe thee: finally there dwelleth no good thing in our fleſh. And although our curſed eſtate, doeth herein greatly appeare, yet our ſinne is made out of meaſure ſinnefull, through the exceeding grace which thou offreſt by the Goſpell of thy deere ſonne; wherby wee are ſo farre from profiting, that of our ſelues we ſhoulde waxe worſe and worſe. For the more light of knowledge is ſhewed, the blinder would we remain: the greater obedience is taught, the fro-

frowarder and ſtubberner woulde we become, if thou by the mightie working of thy holy ſpirite, ſhouldeſt not cauſe it to be fruitfull. And although we haue this naturall corruption in common, with the whole rotten race of Adam: yet we confeſſe, that in vs it hath budded, and ſhotte foorth ſo much more then in others, as wee haue had moe meanes to kill it, and to cauſe it to wither, thē others haue had. Where firſt of all, the gracious offer of the treaſure of thy holy goſpel vnto vs, maketh vs guiltie many wayes. For where paſſing by many other nations, thou haſt truſted our nation withall: yet with a number of vs, hath it found as ſmall entertainment, and felt as great reſiſtaunce,

as amongeſt them, at whoſe gates it neuer knocked. For a great portion of the land, partly neuer yelding thi ſelues to the obedience thereof, and partly falling from it, after th ey had once yeelded: ſtand proudly as it were at the ſtaues end with thee. The reſt which make profeſſion of their ſubmittaunce vnto it, doe it not accordingly. For firſt, there be heapes of our people, which either through an yrckeſomneſſe of the yron yoke of the Popiſh religion, or through a wicked opinion which they nouriſh, of embracing any religion ſet foorth: ſo caſt aſide the former poperie, as they ſtil abyde in an vtter ignoraunce of the trueth it ſelfe: in ſuch ſorte, (that through want of Preaching), they

are

are as rawe in the knowledge of the true seruice of thee, as they were expert before in the seruice of the deuill. And where knowledge is, to any such sufficiencie as is requisite, for the inheritours of the kingdome of heauen: there is it (for a great part) wyned with such hypocrisie, as maketh them more detestable before thee, (which searchest the very raines,) then if they had still continued in their ignorance. Now, for the remnant of vs, which through grace haue truly, and faithfully beleeued, it is with so great weakenesse of faith, and so small reformation of manners: That our glorious profession of the Gospell, supported and borne out with so small shewe of the fruites

the fruites, which the excellencie thereof doeth require, maketh not onely the enemies to condemne vs, but our selues to suspect one an other, whether we belong vnto thee or no. Wherein O Lord, we acknowledge that to be our great and horrible sinne, that being put in trust with this vnspeakable treasure of thy holy Gospell, and preferred to our neighbours, professours about vs; yet wee are in thankeful obediẽce vnto thee, behinde them all: first in knowledge, last in zeale; before thẽm in the doctrine of thy holy Gospell, behind thẽ in the discipline of the same. The yoke of the slauery of our bodies, whiche the Popish religion layed vppon vs, wee willingly shake off: but the holy

holy bandes of thy lawe, whereby our vitious life and affections, ſhoulde be brought into bondage, we doe hardly, and heauily admitte. The Goſpell which brought a freer vſe of our lawfull honors, pleaſures and commodities, was welcome vnto vs: but the ſame Goſpell, which reſtraineth the vnlawfull licentiouſneſſe of our ambition, intemperancie and couetouſneſſe, is not ſo. Finally ſo much of the Goſpell, as doeth more neerely reſpect our ſaluation, wee ſeeme to haue ſome care to retaine: but ſo much of it as doth more directly reſpect thy glorie, and the profite one of an other, (thoſe eſpecially which are not of the ſame lande with vs) we make ſmall accompt off. And

seeing the naked treasure of the holy Gospell, had beene a rich reward of a most seruiceable subiection: it comming vnto vs not alone, but accompanied with so long a peace, with so great a welth, so plentifull aboundance of all things, as this land hath neuer or seldome vsed, other landes about vs haue long looked after: maketh our guilt a greate deale more, bicause that in thy so great a largis towardes vs, we haue bene so vngratious towardes thee againe. Here therefore is an other stayer, whereby our sinne climeth higher. For that we, in the commodities of this life, surmounting our auncestours of the same profession of the Gospell, in king Henrie and king Edwarde

wardes time: are, for the fruites that such a liberalitie asketh at our handes, a greate deale worse then they: and going beyond other landes in these outward blessinges, are outrunne of them, euen in the very outward testimonies and tokens of our obedience towardes thee. And besides this huge heape, and (as it were) reeke, of our generall and common sinnes, we haue to confesse (at the barre of thy iudgement seate) the particular sinnes that we haue locked vppe in our seuerall estates. For our gouernours, O LORDE, for the most parte, beeing more mindefull of the fulfilling of their affections, then either of thy glorie, or of their good estate, which

which are committed vnto them, haue not helde so steady a hande as they ought to haue done, either for the stablishing of the lawes, by which (vnder thee,) they shoulde haue ruled vs, and we by them should haue beene gouerned of thee, or for the thorough execution of so many, and so farre foorth as they haue beene well established. Our Iudges & other ministers of iustice likewise, haue either ignorantly, or corruptly declyned from righteous iudgement: or giuing sentence for the trueth, they haue done it (diuerse of them) with no conscience of thy true feare, or loue of trueth, but for respect, either of vaine glory, or of persons. The Ministers, which shoulde haue beene

lighes

lightes vnto all estates, haue for the most part, no light in themselues: & their estate, in whose good constitution and sound health, the rest should haue recouered their health, is of all other the most sicke vnto death. For if the whole number be surueyed, scarce the hundred will be founde, to be in the lotte of a faithfull ministerie. For ah alas, howe many are there, which occupying the place of Ambassadours, either for want of abilitie, or for that they loue ease and sleepe, carrie no tollerable ambassage at all: how many which carrying the light of the Gospell in their mouthes, carrie also in their handes, the filthie water of ambition and couetousnesse to quench it with. And

those which by thy grace, are for their mighte and will in some good measure iustifiable: notwithstanding, for the moste parte, beare it with suche infirmitie, through slippes, aswell in a sound and substanciall maner of teaching, as also in an euen life answering therevnto, that if thy blessinge were not merueilous vppon their labours, we shoulde not neede to feare, the quenching of this fire of the holy Gospell, kindled among vs, by the enemies: as that which hauing so small attendaunce of blowing, would die of it selfe. Finally, the people beare so small loue vnto their gouernours of all sortes, in loue so small reuerence, and in them both so little willing obedience: that it may bee

(not

(not vneasely) seene, that all the partes of the Church and common wealth, haue conspired to prouoke thee Lord against them. These our great and ouergrowen sinnes, albeit they are gotten aboue our heades, yet rest they not here. For where thou hast by thy holy seruauntes, the Ministers of thy blessed worde, sharpely chidden with vs, and in a seuere denouncing of thy iudgementes due vnto them, fearefully threatened vs for them: yet haue wee not trembled at thy voyce, at which the Mountaynes doe melte, and the rockes doe rent a sunder. A straunge thinge, that the Lyon shoulde roare, & the weake

Lambes should not be affraide: that the Lorde of Hoastes shoulde proclaime warre against vs, and wee shoulde not goe forth and meete him, for intreatie of peace. Nay, his wrath (as hath beene shewed) hath bene & yet is kindled amongest vs: and yet as senceleſſe men, and as dead fleſhe, we are not moued. We are pricked, & we feele it not. We are wounded, & we doe not ſo much as aske, who hath ſtricken vs. The tempeſt that is comming toward vs, threateneth our vtter drowning: and yet as a drunken man, wee lie ſleeping in the verie toppe of the maſt. Whereby it is euident againſt our ſelues, that vnto the multitude of our ſinnes, wee haue added an other degree of wickedneſſe,

kednesse, which is, the continuance in them: vnto our disobedience, we haue ioyned stubbornes, and the biles and botches of our rebellion being ougly in thy sight, doe through the putrefaction and festrednesse of them cast out such stincke, as the earth which we tread vpon, the waters whiche we drink, and the aire which we breath, are tainted and poisoned with the infection of them. Yea Lorde, taught by the wonderfull iustice of thy righteous lawe, we charge vpon our heads all the sinnes of our fathers and graundfathers, to the vttermost of our generations which are past: as those wherevnto we are iuster inheritours, then vnto any landes or goods that they haue left vs. Where-

by it falleth out against vs, that our sinnes touch the cloudes, yea, breake into the heauens of thy maiesties own residence: whose measure being alreadie (as it semeth) filled, there remaineth nothing, but that it should be turned vppon our heads. Whereupon we make against our selues another confession, that we are vnworthy of all the benefites of this life, or of the life to come: both those which wee either haue, or yet hope to enioy, from the greatest to the smallest, from the kingdome of heauen, to one onely drop of Water. That we are worthie of all the plagues, which either haue heretofore ceased, or beene yet possessed of vs. Yea if thou shouldest ransacke all the hid, & secrete treasures

sures of thy fearefull iudgementes, which in thy lawe thou threutenest against the breakers thereof, not onlie to the rasing and sweeping vs from the face of the earth, but also to the throwing of vs headlong into the bottomlesse pitte of hell: yet wouldst we therein also acknowledge thy righteous iudgementes: for vnto vs belongeth shame and confusion of faces, but vnto thee glory & righteousnes. All which both guilt of sinne, and desert of punishment, notwithstanding, (O father of mercies, & God of all cõfort) wee trusting vnto the promises which thou hast made vs in Iesus Christ, are bold through him, humbly to call for the performance of them. And first we humbly desire thee, to

forgiue vs all our sinnes. Thou hast saide, that if we confesse our sinnes thou art faithfull to forgiue vs them. We acknowledge the debte, cancell therefore the obligation: let not the multitude of them prenaile against vs, but where our sinne, hath abounded, let thy grace more abounde, and as we haue multiplyed our sinnes, so we pray thee to multiply thy mercies: and although wee haue by continuaunce in them, so soked our selues, that thereby we are not onely lightly stained, but also haue gotte as it were the scarlet & purple die of them: yet let them all (we pray thee,) being washed in the blod of thy deare sonne, be made as whyte, as the snowe in Salmon, and as the wolle of the sheepe

keep which come from washing. And I conclude, as our sinnes haue magnified themselues in an infinit length, breadth, depth and height: so let thy mercies (which passe all vnderstanding) of all sides, and all assayes out reache them. Therefore also we most humbly desire thee O Lord, that the same being pardoned, thy wrath which he is alreadie declared, may be appeased towardes all the Churches of our profession, and especially towards vs, that the manifolde breaches of the Churches and common wealthes may be made vp, that those being receyued into the bosome of the Church, which belong to thy election: the rest of the Papistes and heretikes may be vtterly rooted out, &

that the enemies in religion, being
ſlaine, we may to the vttermoſt think
all one thing in the honeſte and peaceable gouernment of the common
wealth. Vpon which vniting of vs in
all trueth and honeſtie, the curſes of
the plague, and barrennesſe being remoued, a way may be made to thy bleſſinges, which (as the hills do the valleis) may make our land holeſomely
fruitfull. And that not onely the
wrath which is alreadie kindled may
be quenched, but that which hath
beene lately threatned, may be cauſed to retyre. For the graunt whereof vnto vs, we beſeech thee to remember, that howe vnworthy ſoeuer, yet are wee thy people, and the
Sheepe of thy paſture, whome thou

haſt

ſt redemed with thy moſt pretious
lood, watched ouer with a carefull
e, defended with a mightie hand:
eſpiſe not therfore O Lord, the wor-
s of thy hands. And ſeing thou haſt
ued vs, when we hated thee, viſited
s, when we deſired thee not, then ac-
nowledged vs, when we knewe not
hee: now that there be a nũber of vs,
which loue thee, deſire thine aboade,
& acknowledge thee: hold on thy loue
ſtill, depart not from vs, deny vs not,
O thou God of trueth, which art the
God that chaungeſt not. And if thou
wouldeſt or couldeſt forget vs, calling
vpon thee: yet what ſhould become of
thy great name, which is called vpon
by vs? And therefore for thy glories
ſake, and for thy bleſſed name ſake,

which

which in our destruction shoulde be
rent and runne through, spare vs,
spare vs good Lord, according to thy
vsuall dealing, which thou hast euer
kept with those, which in prayer haue
had recourse vnto thee, and accor-
ding to the olde and vnchangeable
nature, of a merciful, kind, sparing, &
long suffering God. Which mercie we
do not, (O Lord) desire, to the end
that we shoulde tumble and wallowe
our selues in our accustomed neglect,
and contempt of thy holy worde: but
together with mercie for our sinnes,
and the rewarde of them, we moste
humbly craue vppon the knees of our
hearte: that for the time to come,
(howe long, or howe short soeuer) we
with denial and detestation of our

selues

...es, and of our wicked luſtes, may
...r vp vnto thee in Ieſus Chriſte,
...r ſelues, our bodies and ſoules to
...ſeruauntes at thy holy commaun-
...ment in that reaſonable ſeruice,
...hich the high reaſon of thy holy
...rde doth preſcribe: and to be wea-
...ns, or inſtruments of righteouſnes,
...d holineſſe, as they haue bene here
...fore of the contrarie. All which
...inges, as whatſoeuer thou knoweſt
...be further needefull for vs, or for
any of the Churches, we pray
thee, as our ſauiour hath
taught. &c.

AMEN

sinnes, with fayth and repentaunce.

O Mercifull and heauenly Father, we thy seruãts doe humbly prostrate our selues before thy Maiestie, acknowledging here in thy sight our hainous offences committed against thy Maiestie, seeing and beholding thy heauie wrath against them: we feele our selues laden (O Lord our God) with a huge company of horrible sinnes, whereof euen the very least, (beeing but conceiued in thought,) is sufficient in iudgemẽt, to throwe vs downe to the euerlastinge burning Lake. Our owne consciences, O Lorde, doe beare witnesse against

against vs, of our manifolde transgressions of thy blessed lawe, of our securitie and senceleſſe blindeneſſe, running headlong to deſtruction, cõmitting ſinne after ſinne, although not notorious to the worlde, yet horrible before thine eye. The thoughts of our heartes riſe vp in indgement against vs: the vanitie of our talk before thy maieſtie condemneth vs: the wickedneſſe of our deedes from thy ſight reiecteth vs: all our wicked thoughts, wordes and deeds, with the inwarde corruption of our nature, do altogether as it were a whole lumpe and loade of ſinne, lie heauie vppon vs, & with their intollerable weight doe euen preſſe vs downe to Hell.

Wee doe dayly grone vnder the

bur-

burthen of them, inwardly lamenting our owne follie, so greedily running into them. In heauen, earth, or hel, we see none able to sustaine the weight of them, but euen thy dearly beloued sonne Iesus Christ, who in mercy infinite, and compassion endlesse, hath sustained and ouercome that endlesse punishment due vnto them: in him therefore, in him most mercifull Father, and through him, we come to thee, being fully assured according to thy promise, that thou wilt accept & take that full recompence, which he thy deare sonne hath made for vs, as a iust ransome for all the sinnes of all those, who with a true faith take hold on him. In him therfore we see thine anger toward vs appesed, thy wrath

satis-

satisfied, and our debts paide.

Increase in vs, (good Lord,) we beseech thee, this liuely and feeling faith, for we feele it oftentimes in vs very weake, and troubled with many doubtes: increase it in vs (O Lorde) that we may through thy holy spirite be assured, that the punishment of our sinnes is fully in thy sonne discharged. Make vs, O Lord our God, to feele this same in our soules and consciences, that Iesus Christe is ours, and al that he hath done: that we are grafted into his body, and made one with him, and therefore fellow heires with him of euerlasting life. Let vs not onely haue these wordes in our mouthes (good Lord) but through thy holy spirite, let vs feele the comfort of them in our heartes fully sealed

and setled in vs: that we feeling our selues inwardly before thy iudgement seate discharged, and our consciences towardes thee appeased: may be swallowed vp with an vnfaigned loue toward thy heauenly Maiestie, and towardes our brethren for thy sake. Make sinne to dye in vs daily more and more, that we may hate, detest, and vtterly abhorre all sinne and wickednesse in all men, but especially in our selues: that we may strongly (through thy holy spirite) set our selues in open warre and defiance against all sin and wickednes: that we please not our selues in our sinns, but straightly examining sinne by the iust rule of thy holy lawes, we may vtterly from the buttome of our heartes con-

demne euen the least sinne in our selues, hauing our whole ioy, comfort, & consolation, vpon those things which be agreeable to thy blessed will, alwayes being afraide to doe any thing contrarie to the same: that we may euen from the bottome of our hearts, examine and trie our thoughtes, before thy presence, that they be vpright and vnfained, not hypocriticall in outward shewe only, and appearance; but that euen all corners of our hearts being opened and disclosed before thee, we may euen as though it were openly before the face of the whole world, bring them in shewe, knowing that a double heart is detestable in thy sight: and that we may walke alwayes as before thine eyes,

not only before the eyes of man, being more carefull to walke circumspectly, in this respect, that we haue thee to be a viewer of our doings, a thousande folde more then the eyes of man: that thus we may walke as becommeth thy children, not onely in outward shewe, but also in sinceritie of heart, abhorring euen the least sinne in our selues, striuing, resisting, and fighting against sinne, not delighting our selues in sinne, nor nourishing the same in our breast, but earnestly embracing, and studiously seeking after those things which be pleasant in thine eyes: that neither the feare of man, nor losse of goods, life, landes, possessions or friendes, drawe vs away frõ thee, to do any the least thing con-

trarie to thy will and pleasure: neither the fauour or friendship of man, nor yet the flattering enticements of this world, nor the vaine promotions of the same, doe moue vs any whit from the true and endlesse ioy, delight and pleasure which we ought to haue in those things which be agreeable to thy will, and the constant performance of the same: but that alwayes to the end of our life we may continue in thy pathes, growing and increasing from faith to faith, from strength to strength, till at the length we shall come to thy euerlasting rest. Amen.

A Prayer for the Queene.

Gratious Lorde, and most mercifull Father, we acknowledge thee the Lorde of Lordes, and the King of Kinges, creating at the beginning, and ruling all thinges euermore in heauen and earth, according to thy wonderfull wisedome and power: and our selues to be thy poore seruantes, the worke of thy handes, and the sheep of thy pasture, subiected to thy Maiestie, & depending vpon thy fatherly prouidence for all things. Neuertheless, seeing thou in thy wisedome

annoyntest Kings and Queenes, appointing them to rule ouer thy people, to sit as Lieuetenants in thy seat, to minister iustice, and most of all, as Fathers and Nurses to maintaine & cherish thy Church: commaunding vs not only to obey and honour them: but moreouer to pray for them, as watching ouer vs for our good. We therefore beseech thee for thy great mercies sake, and for Iesus Christes sake, to shewe thy mercy to all Kinges and Princes, that maintaine thy glorious Gospell: but especially we pray thee to blesse our gratious Queene, in all spirituall blessings in Christ Iesu, and in all temporall blessings, according to thy good pleasure, that in the great measures of thy effectuall lone,

she may more and more finde greate increase of vertue, and wisedome, & strength in Christ Iesus, to the faithfull and happie discharge of her duetie, that her holinesse, and ioy, and zeale of thy house may be multiplied and euerlasting.

And seeing it hath pleased thee, of thy singular mercy, to giue her this speciall honour, first to suffer for thy glorious trueth, and afterward miraculously deliuering her out of the handes of her enimies, to set a crowne vpon her head, and to make her the instrument to aduaunce thy glory & Gospell, for which she suffered, and to bring it out of darknesse into light, out of persecution into this great and long peace. As we giue thee most

heartie thankes for this singular benefite, so we beseech thee to make her and vs euermore thankefull for it, and in thy good pleasure still to preserue her for the continuance of these blessings towards vs, with all increase from time to time, to thy glory, the benefite of the Church, and her infinite peace in Christ Iesus, the prince of peace. And furthermore, we pray thee for her, and the estate, that such as be enimies of the Gospell, and her enimies also, for the defence thereof, may not despise the peace offered thē to repentance, but that they may account thy long suffring, & her peaceable & vnbloudy gouernment, an occasion of saluation to their soules, and vnfeined loue to the truth, and their

merci-

merciful souereigne. Otherwise if they still remaine disobedient to the trueth, disobedient to her highnesse, and daungerous to the state, then (O God of our Saluation) as thou hast discouered them, so discouer them still, as thou hast preuented them, so preuent them still, and let their eyes waxe wearie with looking, and their hearts faint with wayting for the cõming of that, which yet commeth not, neither let it come (O Lorde) we beseech thee, but a blessed, and a long reigne to her, and peace to Sion for euermore. Also (deare father) so blesse, so loue, so in thy spirite sanctifie and keep her, that she may in the spirit of counsel and fortitude so rule that other sister also, namely this her cõmon wealth,

wealth, that they may flourish together, and growe vp together as palme trees, in beautie, and in strength, giuing ayde and helpe one to an other, that in the Church the glory of God may appeare, as the Sunne in his brightnesse, and that the lande may flowe with Milke and Honie, and true peace abound therein, as in the triumphant reigne of Debora.

These graces (O Lord) are great, and we miserable sinners, vnworthie of the least of them: therefore looke not to vs, but to thy selfe, not to our iniquities, but to thy great mercies, accepting the death and passion of thy Sonne, as a full ransome for all our offences: throwing them into the bottome of the Sea, and making his

crosse

rosse and resurrection effectuall in
s to all obedience and godlinesse, as
ecommeth thy Saintes: that to all
ther thy good blessings towards our
ration: Soueraigne, this may be ad-
ed, that she gouerneth blessedly, ouer
blessed people, a people blessed of the
Lorde, and beloued of the Lorde, and
hat thy graces may abound as the
waters of the Sea, in the Prince and
in the people, in the Church, and in
the Common wealth, from day to
daye, till the day of our translation
into thy kingdome, where iustice in-
habiteth, where also we shall inha-
bite and reigne with thee, according
to thy promise for euer. Graunt
these thinges (O mercifull Father)
for thy deare Sonne our Lorde Iesus
Christ

Christ his sake, in whose name we
crave them at thy mercifull hand,
praying furthermore for them, as
he hath taught vs to pray.

Our Father which art
in heauen, &c.

FINIS.

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THE HOLIE exerciſe of a true Faſt, deſcribed out of Gods word.

WH 1158. 330

¶ Ioel. 2.12.13.

Turne you vnto me (ſaith the Lord) with all your heart, and with faſting, and with weeping, and with mourning. And rent your heart, and not your clothes: and turne vnto the Lord your God, for he is gracious, and merciful, ſlowe to anger, and of great kindneſſe, and repenteth him of the euill.

Seene and allowed.

AT LONDON,
Printed for Iohn Hariſon, and Thomas Man.
AN. 1580.

be truly made, without hope of obtaining the grace, that is prayed for. But for as much as prayer, is a daily and ordinarie exercise of Gods children:

*.3.8. it is manifest * that by the prayer*

8.4. which is coupled with fasting, there is vnderstanded a speciall or peereless kinde of prayer, both in zeale and strength of prayer, as also in continuance of the same. Whereby appeareth, that here is an other vse of the outward abstinence, that it might be as it were a wing, wherewith the praier, that otherwise through earthly affections, creepeth vpon the grounde, might the easier flee vp into heauen: and that it might be a grindestone, to make a point of it, that it may pearce, and to set an edge that it may

cut,

cut, both the visible and invisible enimies, which we pray against. And therefore the outwarde abstinence that pulleth downe the body, helpeth to lift vp the minde, and crucifying the flesh, it quickneth the spirite, and maketh it more liuely to this exercise. Where yet againe the Popish fast is found insufficient, which vpon the dayes of their fastes, had no extraordinarie exercises of prayer: more then other dayes which were not fasted. To the better performance also of this part, is annexed an informatiō and meditation, of the gracious promises of GOD, especially such as may serue for reliefe of the present occasions.

Wherin the better to correct our dul-

neſſe and heauineſſe to this ſo holy an exerciſe, let vs remember, that it is to obtaine ſome ſpeciall grace at the hand of the Lord. Whereby it is giuen vs to vnderſtand, that vpon due holding of this faſt vnto the Lord, there be excellent promiſes & a moſt ſingular reward. Whereof the place of Ioel, as it ſpake before, for the commaundement of all the faſtes, which the people of God vſed, ſo will it vndertake for the promiſes, which the Lorde hath made, to all thoſe which ſubmit them ſelues to the obedience thereof. The truth of which promiſes is ſo manifeſt in the Scriptures: as the Sunne (at noone dayes) can be no clearer. For let all the faſtes of the holy Churches, and of

2.13. 20.

godly

godly men laid out in Scripture, both of the olde and newe Teſtament be ✶ *turned ouer: and it ſhall be ſeene, that the end of their faſt (which kept it in any meaſure of trueth and ſimplicitie) was a feaſt, and the iſſue of their mourning, great reioyſing. For, albeit the ordinarie prayers of the faithfull, returne not emptie vnto them againe: yet hauing regarde vnto theſe, which are ioyned with this exerciſe, they may worthily ſeem to be barren, which are otherwiſe fruitfull, and to be blaſted, which otherwiſe ſeeme ful eared. Yea the faſt of the wicked king Achab, ioined with no true repentance, nor ſo much as with any trueknowledge how to ſerue the Lord, but performed in ſome ſort*

✶ Iu 23. Ezra. Heſt. 2.Ch 20.3 Dan. Iona Act. Act. 1.Reg 27.

onely in keeping of the outward and bodily ceremonie, went not vnrewarded from the Lorde. For euen by the very ſhadowe of his exerciſe, the execution of that iudgement, which was awarded againſt him, touching his vtter raſing from the kingdome of Iſrael: was differred vntill his ſonnes dayes. Nowe, if the comming within the ſhadowe of this exerciſe, doeth heale ſome diſeaſes: what will it doe if wee come to touche the bodye thereof? and if the leaues of it, haue ſome vertue to preſerue men from the vengeance of God: howe ſoueraigne is the fruit, to deliuer vs from the wrath to come? And if the ordinarie obedience of the children of GOD, goeth not emptie, and vn-

rewarded from the preſence of GOD: *this extraordinarie obedience and exerciſe, in the worſhippe of* GOD, *muſt needes receiue ſpeciall, and extraordinarie bleſſinges from his hande. When Benhadab the Syrian king, ouercome by Achab king of Iſrael, was out of hope of any ſafetie, at the length by the aduice of his ſeruaunts, he put himſelfe and his companie in ſackcloth, with ropes about their neckes: thinking by humbling themſelues before the king, to obtaine pardon, which came to paſſe accordingly. If therefore, men in hope of obtaining pardon, will humble themſelues to them, of whome they haue no promiſe, that they ſhal obtaine any thing:* 1. R. 20. 1. R. 31.

 hame

howe much more ought we to doe it, which haue ſo ſure promiſes of good ſucceſſe? and if mercy was obtained of men, in whom there is ſcant a drop of that pitie and compaſſion, which is ſeafull in the Lorde: we may be well aſſured, that we ſhall not miſſe of it at his hande. And if one enimie, can looke for it at the hande of an other: we may with greater aſſurance, looke for it at the hande of the Lorde, to whome we are already reconciled, by the bloud of his ſonne.

Therefore, if the authoritie of the Lorde ſhould not compell vs: yet the moſt liberall and certaine promiſes, ſhould allure vs to this exerciſe. "*Which if we doe not, what remaineth, but that ſuch as will not faſt,*

with

with the children of GOD, muſt eate and drinke of the furious wrath of GOD, with the wicked: they that will not weepe with the one, muſt howle with the other. And finally, they that will haue no part, in the obedience of the commaundement giuen hereof, to both the peoples, vnder the Lawe and vnder the Goſpell, muſt haue no part in the promiſes made to any of them: according as the Lorde threateneth, that who ſo euer ſhall not afflict or humble his ſoule with the reſt, that he will deſtroy them from among his people. Leui. 23. Luke. 5.

The time of faſting is the time of affliction, either for want of ſome great benefite needfull, or through

" *feeling of ſome great iudgement pre-*
" *ſent, or to come. Where the Popiſh*
faſt muſt paſſe an other condemnati-
on, which maketh no difference or
choice of time: but appointeth euery
Friday, and other ſet euens yearely,
whether the time be proſperous or
vnproſperous, whether it be peace or
warre, health or ſickneſſe, dearth or
plentie. Which is al one, as if the Phy-
ſician ſhuld nowe appoint his patient,
this day twentie or fortie yeres hence,
to take a purgation, or to be let bloud.
In which caſe, either he muſt be a
Prophet, rather then a Phyſician, to
knowe that he ſhall on that day, haue
neede of it: or elſe he muſt be a Phy-
ſician of no value, ignorant, or vn-
faithfull. As therefore the Phyſi-
cian

cian openeth no vaine, but with obſeruation where the ſigne is, giueth no purgation, without heede taking to the time of the yeare, whether it be ſpring or fall, whether it be hot or colde: ſo it behoueth the ſpirituall Phyſician, to haue an eye vnto the time, when this medicine is in ſeaſon. And ſo much the more, here rather then there, as the daunger is greater. For as a newe piece of cloth added to an olde garment, taketh ſomething from the olde, and cauſeth the rent to be worſe, then before: ſo faſting vnfitly applied, to the ſtate of thoſe that are enioyned to keepe it, maketh them worſe, then they were before the faſt. Yea that which more is, as the newe Luke. 5. Luke. 5.

wine

wine put into olde veſſels, doeth not onely make them worſe, but breake them all to pieces: ſo this faſt thruſt vpon thoſe, which are not, either for the time, or for ſome other cauſe apt for it, doeth vtterly deſtroy them. Whereby men may perceiue, what cauſe we haue to make a great conſcience of the Popiſh faſt, as that which is able of it ſelfe (if there were no other corruptions amongeſt them) to driue a man to eternall deſtruction.

According alſo to the greatneſſe of the affliction, the time of the
lit. 23. 28. *faſt is taken, by the diſcretion of*
" *thoſe, to whome it belongeth, at the*
" *leaſt for a whole day. And if the*
" *wrath of the Lorde be hotter, then*

two

two dayes or * elſe three, as it appeareth by the example of the Iewes in Hesters time and of Saint Paul. And this time (what ſo euer) hath the nature of a Saboth. For therein men are bound to abſtaine from their bodily labours, according to the ſame ſtraightneſſe, and with the ſame exceptions, that they are bound to obſerue the Saboth. And therefore the Prophet willeth them to ſanctifie a faſt: And the Lord threateneth, that who ſo euer ſhall doe any worke on that day, him ſhall he cut off from amongeſt his people. The end whereof is, that men ſetting themſelues apart from their daily occupations, might be wholy beſtowed in the ſpirituall exerciſes aboue ſpecified.

* Ester. 4.

Act. 9. 9.

Leuit. 23. 30. 31.

Ioel. 2. 15

Leui. 23

Where-

Whereby that we may knowe, that there was neuer a threade in the olde cloth of the Popish fast, which was not throughly infected with the spirituall leprosie, of disobedience vnto the Lorde: it is to be noted, that where they ordayned many, both wicked and vnnecessarie holie dayes, ✶ *this* ✶ *one (and besides the Saboth, the onely holie day appointed of the Lorde) they quite rased out of their Kalender. And of the fast in generall thus farre.*

The kindes or sortes of fastes doe followe, which are either priuate or publique.

The priuate fast is that, which is vndertaken vpon some particular calamitie, by the discretion of them

against

againſt whome the calamitie is ſent. And it is either of a particular man or houſhold. In the former whereof it is to be obſerued, that for as much as the faſt is ioyned with a ſeparation from their daily occupations : that neither children, nor ſcholers, nor ſeruantes, nor any other which be at the diſpoſition and gouernement of others, can chuſe any ſuch day appointed for common occupations, without the conſent of thoſe that haue commaundement ouer them. Without which conſent, they muſt be forced to holde their faſtes vpon the Lordes day, or other dayes of reſt, eſtabliſhed in the places of their abode. For here the Lawe of the Lorde hath place, that if the wife, ſonne,

n.30. 4. *ſonne, or daughter, vowe a vowe vnto the Lord: that the huſband or father ſhall haue power to breake it.*

" *The publique faſt is that, which is*
" *vndertaken vpon ſome more generall*
" *calamitie of the Church, at the ap-*
" *pointment of them, which (vnder*
l.2.15. " *Chriſt) haue the gouernement of the*
" *places, where the faſt is holden. In*
this faſt, bicauſe a publique aſſembly is commaunded: it followeth that the chiefe inſtruction of the foreſaid profeſſion of repentance, is to be fetched from the publique preaching of the word.

Now leauing the cauſes of the priuate faſts, to the examinatiõ of euery one, which cã beſt iudge of their own eſtate: let vs conſider, what cauſes there

there be of a generall faſt amongeſt vs. Wherein that it may be ſeene, that the trumpet of faſting is blowen rather, by the breath of GOD, then by the mouth of man: let vs take a ſhort vewe of the cauſes, of the faſtes mentioned in the Scripture. The cauſe of the faſt is the wrath of God „ againſt the Church, where is to be „ conſidered, that the people of God haue not onely regarded this wrath, againſt them ſelues particularly, but againſt others alſo, of the ſame ſocietie and fellowſhippe in religion that they were of, through a mutuall feeling and compaſſion which they haue one with an other: as in the exãple of the Church of Antioch, whoſe faſt Acter. 3 *appeareth to haue ben taken in hand,*

rather for the miſerie of the Church of Ieruſalem, then for them ſelues. Now the Churches round about vs, being fallen into great decay, partly by the ſpirituall miſeries, as well of the hereſies of Papiſts, Arrians, Anabaptiſts, the Familie of loue &c. as alſo of the ſchiſme of Lutheraniſme daily preuayling, partly by bodily plagues of the peſtilence, almoſt in al places: of the ſword in our neighbour coũtries, and of the famine which waiteth cõmonly vpõ the ſame: it is euident that therby groweth one cauſe of hũbling our ſelues before our God. And when this wrath is cõſidered, either in that which is alreadie come, or in that which may be feared ſhortly to come: to whether ſo euer of the cauſes we looke, we ſhal find that we haue cauſe

to fast. For what ſpirituall euil is in any of all their Churches, which are not altogether in ours? not one of thoſe deteſtable hereſies, but are lodged amongſt vs. And although the ſchiſme of Lutheraniſme be not among vs, yet there is almoſt a great diſtraction of minds for the Church gouernement, beſide the diuerſities of iudgementes in many other matters. And among bodily punſhments, the plague hath indifferently fed, and yet doeth feed vpō vs. The ſword hath ben ſhaked at vs both in the North by traytours, and in the South by diſordered wicked perſons. And ſhuld it not ſtrik vs that her maieſtie was of late in daunger of her life by a ſhot. Which that it was not meant towardes her,

ought not to abate our care for her maieſtie, but rather encreaſe it: as that which was more nerely directed againſt her of the Lorde, to make both her and vs to crie for his gratious couer and protection ouer her. And if we conſider the wrath that hangeth ouer our heades, the notes thereof are taken by the example of
9.3. *the people of God, and firſt of Ezra, who vnderſtanding that the people had married ſtraunge women, faſted: whereuppon we haue this note of the wrath to come, that conſidering how that ſinne is committed openly in the land in diuerſe ſortes, that therefore anger is at hand. Here may be hādled with godly and diſcrete wiſdome the ſinnes of the lande.*

The

The ſeconde note to knowe the tempeſt to come, is taken from the Niniuites faſt. Whereuppon we gather, that for ſomuch as we are greeuouſly threatened, aſwell by the miniſters and ſeruauntes of the Lorde, that ſpeake in his name vnto vs, as alſo by his late ſhaking of the earth: that ſharpe iudgement (without repentaunce) muſt ſpedily come vppon vs. The thirde is taken from ſignes of the wrath of god, which may breake out againſt vs: as in Heſter, where it was concluded at the requeſt of Hamon, of the deſtruction of the whole Church, wherewith may fitly be compared the holy league (as they ſay) and decree of the late coũcel of Trent, againſt the whole church Ionas. Heſter.

and against ours particularly. An other signe, is the preparation made against the Church, or an indeuour
ral.20. *to execute malice, which draue Iosaphat and other moe to a fast. Here the loftie countenaunces, and vndewtifull demeanour of the Papistes, may be considered, with their rebellious attempts in Ireland; as also the Spanish nauie, and great preparation made amongst them of the holy league, with the present troubles in Scotland, & like accidents, sufficient to procure the practise of this holy exercise.*

A GENERALL CONFESSION OF Sinnes, to be made at the exerciſe of faſting: the more particuler confeſſiō being taken according to the eſtate of the ſeuerall Churches, by the good diſcretion of the miniſter, vpon the knowledge thereof.

Lord which art glorious in power & holines, we being but duſt and aſhes, with the caſting of our ſelues downe, at the foote of thy high Maieſtie: confeſſe that me are moſt vile ſinners, conceiued and borne in ſinne, & that we are by nature nothing elſe, but a lumpe of all wickedneſſe, whoſe naturall propertie is, to growe in